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Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6453
INFO USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1124

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, KS, MT
SUBJECT: KOREAN QUESTION IN THE UN

REF: STATE 225930

1. AMBASSADOR MADE DEMARCHE REQUESTED IN REFTEL ON SEPT 23 WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA. ALSO PRESENT, AT AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTION, WAS VICTOR GAUCI, WHO LEFT ON FOLLOWING DAY TO ASSUME HIS NEW POSITION AS MALTA'S CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AT THE UN AND IN WASHINGTON.

2. AMBASSADOR OPENED DISCUSSION BY EMPHASIZING THAT WE HAVE IDENTIFIED KOREA AS THE ISSUE MOST VITAL TO OUR INTERESTS AT THE 30TH GA. OUR POSITION ON THAT QUESTION, AS OUTLINED IN THE SECRETARY'S SEPT 22 SPEECH, CONSTITUTED A NEW AND HIGHLY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WHICH WE REGARDED AS BOTH REASONABLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. AMBASSADOR THEN MADE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED PARA 7 REFTEL AND GAVE A COPY OF THEM, PLUS THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH, TO ABELA.

3. WHILE RECOGNIZING MALTA'S PAST POSITION OF SUPPORT FOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION IN RECENT YEARS, REITERATED MOST RECENTLY AT THE LIMA NAC, AMBASSADOR URGED THAT GOM TAKE
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A HARD, NEW LOOK AT THE KOREAN QUESTION ON THE BASIS OF THE

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SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL AND EXAMINE IT ON ITS MERITS WITH AN
OPEN MIND. HE HOPED MALTA COULD AVOID SIMPLY FOLLOWING THE
LEAD OF THE MORE RADICAL MEMBERS OF THE NAC ON THIS QUESTION
AND SAID HE FOUND IT PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND
WHY MALTA FELT COMPELLED TO COSPONSOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION.
TO EXCLUDE THE ROK AS AN INTERESTED PARTY TO ANY SECURITY
AGREEMENTS FOR THE KOREAN ENINSULA SEEMED PATENTLY ABSURD
TO US. THE SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE CONSTITUTED A SINCERE
AND RESPONSIBLE ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE IMPASSE AND WE HOPED
THE MALTESE WOULD GIVE IT CAREFUL STUDY.

4. ABELA PROMISED TO DO SO AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE
QUESTION WITH MINTOFF, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS
WERE GIVEN TO GAUCI. HE RECOGNIZED STRONGLY-HELD USG VIEWS
ON THIS SUBJECT AND REGRETTED THAT THERE WERE MAJOR DIFFERENCES
IN OUR PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM, MOST FUNDAMENTAL OF WHICH
WAS THE STRONG MALTESE VIEW THAT NO SOLUTION ON THE KOREAN
PENINSULA WAS POSSIBLE UNTIL US TROOPS WERE REMOVED FROM
THE ROK. AMBASSADOR'S EXPLANATION (AGAIN) OF US TROOPS'
PRESENCE AS A BILATERAL US-ROK MATTER WAS RECEIVED COURTEOUSLY
BY ABELA BUT OBVIOUSLY DID NOT IMPRESS HIM.

5. ABELA REPEATED THAT GOM WOULD EXAMINE THE KOREAN QUESTION
AGAIN ON THE BASIS OF THE SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE. IN THE
MEANTIME, HE WANTED TO ASSURE THE USG THAT MALTA'S PAST
POSITION REFLECTED A GENUINE CONVICTION, THAT IT HAD NOT
BEEN TAKEN "TO SPITE" THE USG AND THAT IT IN NO WAY REFLECTED
AN ANTI-AMERICAN ATTITUDE.

6. COMMENT: MINTOFF DOES INDEED HAVE STRONG VIEWS ON THE
PRESENCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES IN THIRD COUNTRIES --
INCULDING THE SMALL BRITISH FORCES HERE WHICH HE IS DETERMINED
TO SEE LEAVE AS SOON AS THE CURRENT AGREEMENT WITH THE UK
EXPIRES IN 1979. ABELA'S STATEMENT ON THIS POINT IS THEREFORE
UNDOUBTEDLY ACCURATE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, MALTA'S
CONTINUING COZINESS WITH NORTH KOREA, THE PRC, LIBYA AND
OTHER RADICALS PROBABLY LOOMS LARGER IN MINTOFF'S THINKING
THAN ABELA WANTS TO ADMIT. PRAISE OF NORTH KOREA IN THE
LABOR PRESS HERE IS EFFUSIVE, AND NORTH KOREAN AND MALTESE
DELEGATIONS REGULARLY EXCHANGE VISITS, MOST RECENT ONE OF
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WHICH HAS RESULTED IN NORTH KOREAN UNDERTAKING TO SET UP
A PENCIL FACTORY AND METAL WORKS IN MALTA. OUR DEMARCHE
HAS SERVIED THE PURPOSE OF PUTTING THE MALTESE CLEARLY ON
NOTICE AS TO THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THIS QUESTION.
REALISTICALLY, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MALTA IS
LIKELY TO CHANGE ITS POSITION ON THE KOREAN QUESTION AT
30TH GA. SMITH

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